



Schenectady County  
Historical  
Society

# Newsletter

*Volume 58 Number 1-2*

*January-February 2015*

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*The historic home and law office of Abraham Van Ingen on Washington Avenue  
in the Stockade where his son James was raised*

## **DR. JAMES L. VAN INGEN (1818-1881)**

**By James Strosberg, M.D.**

James L. Van Ingen was well-known to Schenectadians of the mid-19th century. At well over 6 feet and 300 pounds, with dark piercing eyes, black beard, cloaked in a black cape with a feather in his hat, wearing long black boots and carrying a gun or a whip or both, he was a most intimidating figure. This ultimate bully was always getting into fistfights, filing lawsuits against both his patients and his own family, getting arrested on multiple occasions, being dismissed from his position as City Physician, and facing a court-martial during the Civil War. His eccentricity approached insanity. When his brother Dirk died in his home, he kept his body there until the neighbors complained.

*continued on pages 8-9*

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## HOURS

**MUSEUM & LIBRARY**

**MONDAY-FRIDAY 9-5**

**SATURDAY 9-2**

**MABEE FARM**

**TUESDAY-SATURDAY**

**10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Happy New Year to all! May 2015 bring you and your family health, wealth, and joy! The New Year bell has certainly rung in blessings for the Society, having brought us a new owner for the Schermerhorn House whose desire to see that historic home restored to its full potential matches our own.



*The Schermerhorn House in 1887*

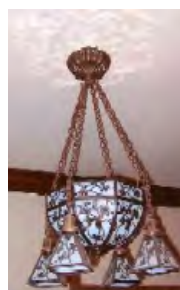


*The House in 1997*

The Schermerhorn House was a 2008 gift to us by Marjorie Schmid, who loved the house she had lived in for over fifty years. It was her hope, and ours, that the home would one day be restored to its original beauty, richly displaying the dark chestnut wainscoting, carved staircase, lovely Victorian stained glass door lights, elaborate period chandeliers, and early electric lights still present in the house. The 1902 G.E. circuit breaker box on the second floor is still pressed into service and shows its copper breakers through the framed glass door, surely unique in this day and age!

Simon J. Schermerhorn, born September 25, 1827, served in a number of public offices—Supervisor of the Town of Rotterdam in 1856, a school board member, a New York State assemblyman in 1862 and 1865, and as a representative to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the United States, serving from March 4, 1893 to March 4, 1895. At age 30, he built his first home on Schermerhorn Road in Rotterdam in 1857, one still called the Schermerhorn Mansion. He built a second one further up the street, the one gifted to us, in 1885. He died in 1901 and is buried in Viewland Cemetery in Rotterdam.

Over the last few years it has become increasingly evident that while our ardent desire was to restore the Schermerhorn House to its original Victorian splendor, our resources were simply not enough to achieve that goal, and its upkeep had become a strain on our operational budget. After much discussion and consideration, we placed the House on the market and hoped that a buyer with the necessary resources and skills would see the beauty within the 1885 walls, and would be able to do what we could not. Happily, that dream has been realized and the home now rests in the hands of a carpenter who has worked on many historic buildings and whose love of the beautiful Victorian woodwork and early electrical lighting fixtures persuaded him to purchase this Schenectady County gem. With great interest and optimism, we now await the next chapter in the home's history to unfold.



Wishing you all the best for the New Year and beyond ..... *Marianne*



# SOCIETY NEWS

The best way to stay current with regard to Society policies and endeavors is, of course, to visit our website, [www.schenectadyhistorical.org](http://www.schenectadyhistorical.org). That is so because it is updated very often, virtually every day, whereas this Newsletter is issued only bi-monthly. But there are a few things we wish to bring to your attention here and now.

## Shared power of Trustees and Members

The Historical Society is a “Membership Organization” that is defined by the New York State Education Department as one that must grant to Members at our Annual Meeting in April the authority and responsibility to elect the officers and other Trustees of the Society. And when they wish to do so, and with required advance notification of that intent, they may amend Society By-Laws. Not all not-for-profit organization that call their donors “members” are actually legally constituted “Member Organizations,” most of whom like it that way. We have no term limits, but welcome fresh blood.

## Become a candidate for Trustee!

The Society Board of Trustees consists of 24 persons, all unpaid volunteers, who meet monthly. Trustees, who must be members, are either elected or re-elected to three-year terms by Membership at the Annual Meeting in April. The Board’s nominating committee, appointed by our President, nominates candidates for Trustee positions but nominations may also be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting on April 11. Members who aspire to become Trustees are encouraged to send resumes that state their interest and qualifications to our President, Marianne Blanchard, Schenectady County Historical Society, 32 Washington Avenue, Schenectady NY, 12305. We would very much like to hear from you.

## How you can help us: Five Shades of Grey and Green

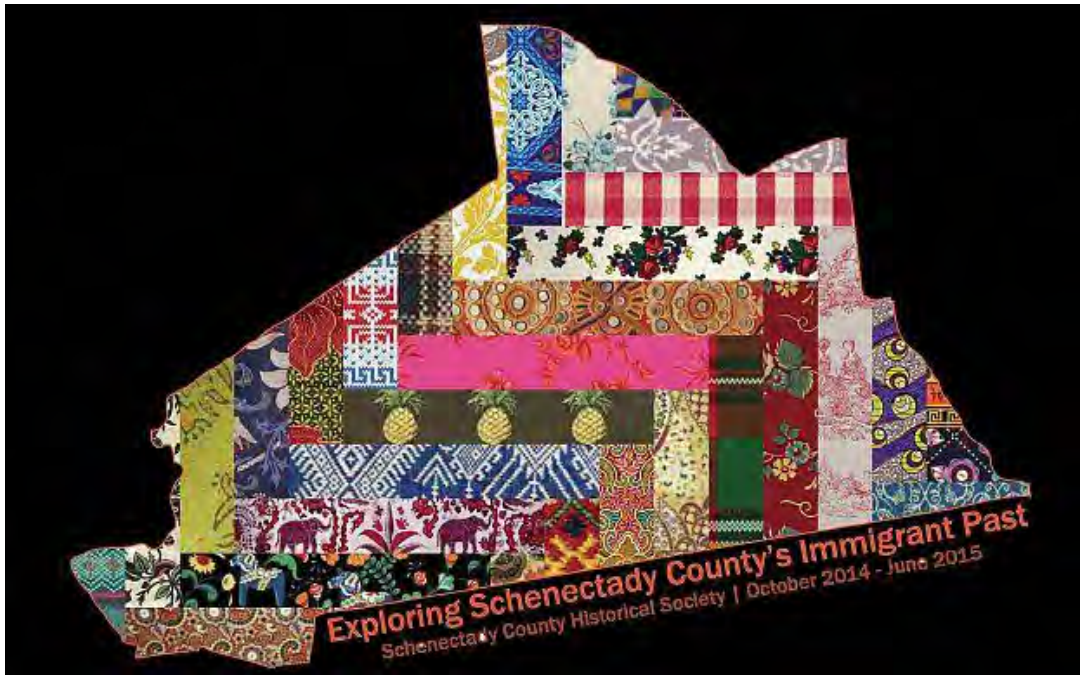


The reader may be surprised to learn that although we have over a thousand members, the aggregate annual value of their membership dues has been a pretty constant \$30,000, just 6% of our annual operational budget, and that percentage keeps falling because budget needs inflate and membership income tends not to. Surely, we can do better; a doubling to at least 12% would do great things for the financial health of the Society. How could you help? Here are the five ways

1. Use the Donate link on our website to make a supplemental donation to SCHS.
2. Use the Donate link to authorize an automatic monthly donation of \$10 or \$15 or whatever.
3. Use the Donate link to renew your membership early and at least at the next higher level than last year.
4. Those interested in giving gift subscriptions to friends and relatives are encouraged to call the office.
5. Clip or copy the following form, fill it in, and use U.S. Mail to implement option 2:

Card to Bill (please circle):	Visa	MasterCard	Discover	American Express		
Credit Card Number:						
Security Code (3or 4 digits):			Expiration Date:			
Monthly Contribution Amount (circle or insert):	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$25	\$50	\$_____other
Month to Start:	(Card will be billed on the 15 <sup>th</sup> )					

**Schenectady County Historical Society, 32 Washington Avenue, Schenectady, NY 12305 (518) 374-0263 x5**



Join us for a series of exhibits, events, and programs that examines who we are, where we come from, and how immigration, diversity, and cultural identity have shaped Schenectady County.

## EXHIBITS:

***Where Do You Come From?*** through February 7 at the Mabee Farm Historic Site  
Featuring original artwork from local artists, the exhibit explores identity, heritage, and the tapestry of cultures that make up Schenectady County today.

***Boomtown: Immigration, Technology , & Urban Schenectady*** 1/10–6/28  
at 32 Washington Avenue. For thousands of immigrants, Schenectady County offered both opportunities and challenges. This exhibit explores why people immigrate and the impact of immigration and technology on urban Schenectady.

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

***Shtetl on the Mohawk*** with Harvey Strum, 1/10 2:00 PM at 32 Washington Avenue\*

***Finding Your Ancestors in Immigration & Naturalization Records*** with Keren Weiner  
2/7 at 2:00 PM at 32 Washington Avenue\*

***The Impact of the Erie Canal on Immigration*** with Craig Williams, 2/28 2:00 PM | Mabee Farm\*

***Howlin' at the Moon*** with music celebrating Irish heritage, 3/6 7 PM at Mabee Farm (\$5:00)

***American Girl Doll Tea featuring Rebecca Rubin***, 3/14 at 2 PM 32 Washington Ave (\$5:00)

***Electric City Immigrants*** with Robert Pascucci, 3/28 at 2 PM at 32 Washington Ave\*

Items terminating with \* are free to Society members, \$5 for non-members

***Exploring Schenectady County's Immigrant Past*** is supported by grants from the New York Council for the Humanities and the Schenectady County Initiative Program. For more information please visit

[www.schenectadycountyhistorical.org](http://www.schenectadycountyhistorical.org)

## New Materials in the Library

### BOOKS

*Electric City: General Electric in Schenectady* by Julia Kirk Blackwelder, gift of **Daily Gazette**  
*Upper Hudson Valley Beer* by Craig Gravina and Alan McLeod, gift of **Jenna Riley**

### YEARBOOKS

John Bigsbee School (1956), gift of **Marie Cary**  
Mont Pleasant High School (1960, 1962), gift of **Earl Ballou**

### DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Mielke Family Collection. Collection pertains to members of the Mielke, Yates, Van Aernam, and Dettbarn families in Schenectady. Collection includes photographs, correspondence, biographical information, legal papers, materials related to homes/land, newspaper clippings, and ephemera. Gift of **Evelyn Thode**.

Materials relating to Zimola and Clark families of Scotia/Schenectady (1930s-1940s). Gift of **Marilyn Moger**, in memory of Norma Clark.

Material related to Ellis Hospital. Includes publications, clippings, and photographs Supplemental to materials previously donated. Gift of **Ellis Hospital**.

12 digital photographs related to local performer Vincent Luke Genre. Gift of **Vince Genre**.

*Watchtower* [Mont Pleasant High School newspaper] v. XXXII, no. 8 (1962). Gift of **Earl Ballou**.

News indexes and obituary lists from *Schenectady Gazette*, 1979-1990. Gift of **Schenectady County Public Library**.

## Discontinuation of Thursday Evening Hours

After six years, our Library and Museum at 32 Washington Avenue have discontinued Thursday evening hours due to low visitation during the extended hours. Thanks and gratitude to volunteers Carol Lewis and Bill Buell, who dedicated themselves to staffing the Library and Museum on Thursday evenings, 5 to 8 p.m.

## New Museum Accessions



↑ *A 19th century sleigh, used in Schenectady County, gift of **Greg Troupe***

Three oil paintings by Samuel Sexton, depicting William McCamus, Helen Maxwell Yates, and Harriet Yates van der Bogert, gift of **Cal and Carol Welch**



↑ *Collection of Coggeshall/Darling family artifacts, brought to Schenectady from Japan, c. 1911-1913, gift of **Martha Leonard***

WWII Red Cross volunteer nurse's aide uniform, gift of **Sandra Beloncik**

Collection of political campaign buttons, gift of **Charles Steiner**



# Exhibits and Programs – January-March 2015

For more information, please check our website, [www.schenectadyhistorical.org](http://www.schenectadyhistorical.org) or call us at (518) 374-0263 and listen for the option describing Programs. Please call (518) 887-5073 regarding programs at the Mabee Farm or Franchere Education Center. **EXHIBITS** and **PROGRAMS** are free for Society members; a \$5.00 charge for non-members applies unless otherwise noted.

## On Exhibit at 32 Washington Avenue

### **Boomtown: Immigration, Technology, and Urban Schenectady\***

*Opening January 10*

Humans are always on the move. We seek new opportunities and face challenges as we adapt to the world around us. For thousands of immigrants, Schenectady County offered its own opportunities and challenges. This exhibit explores why people immigrate, and the unprecedented impact of immigration and technology on urban Schenectady.

## On Exhibit at Franchere Education Center

### **Where Do You Come From?\***

*Through February 7*

Featuring original artwork from local artists, *Where Do You Come From?* explores identity, heritage, and the tapestry of cultures that make up Schenectady County today.

### **Hops & Hogsheads: Beer from Colonial to Craft Brew**

*Through March 13*

This exhibit explores the impact beer has had in the area from the early Dutch settlers, and winding through history to today's two Schenectady County breweries.

### **Works by Lisa David**

*Opening February 14*

Prolific painter Lisa David is a local artist and teacher. Her works, including scenes from around Schenectady County, will be on display through May.

### **It Came from Schenectady: Science Fiction & Fantasy in the Capital Region**

*Opening March 21*

What if you had a superpower? What if you could travel through time? What if machines overtook Schenectady? "What if" questions inspire writers, artists, and filmmakers to create new worlds and imagine alternate realities. *It Came from Schenectady* invites you to discover the "what ifs" that inspired the creations of local science fiction innovators, including Kurt Vonnegut, Ray Nelson, and Glendora. Join us on a journey through time and space as we explore the legacy of science fiction and fantasy in Schenectady County!

## Program Calendar

**Sunday, January 4 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

### ***Howlin' at the Moon Concert***

**Performers:** 13 Feet of Bluegrass & Cosby Gibson

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

**Cost:** \$5.00

Let's kick the season off with a bang as we welcome 13 Feet of Bluegrass back to the *Howlin'* stage for high-energy bluegrass, 70s and 80s country rock, blues, originals and a spectrum from the Allman Brothers to Flatt and Scruggs. Also performing is original acoustic and contemporary folk singer/songwriter, Cosby Gibson.

**Saturday, January 10 – 2:00 p.m.**

### ***Shtetl on the Mohawk: Jews of Schenectady\****

**Speaker:** Harvey Strum

Also **opening reception** for exhibit ***Boomtown: Immigration, Technology, and Schenectady.***

**Location:** 32 Washington Avenue

Harvey Strum will discuss the history of Schenectady's Jewish community, with a focus on the impact of World War I, Zionism, Socialism, community organization, and changes produced by Americanization. This event also celebrates the opening of the exhibit *Boomtown: Immigration, Technology, and Urban Schenectady.*

**Saturday, January 17 – 2:00 p.m.**

### ***Heritage Hops***

**Speaker:** Dietrich Gehring

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

New York State has a long history of hops production, from the mid 19th Century boom and decline to today's Farm Brewery Act. Join hops farmer Dietrich Ghering to discuss the impact of hops today, and his efforts to grow Helderberg hops, a type used by a farmer who is believed to be the last of the old-time hops growers in Albany County.

**Saturday, January 24 – 2:00 p.m.**

### ***"Your Beer, Brewed Here:" The Story of the Wolf Hollow Brewing Company***

**Speakers:** Jordan White and Pete Bednarek

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

Join Wolf Hollow Brewing Company brewery founders Jordan White and Pete Bednarek as they share the story of their journey from home brew enthusiasts to founders of one of the only breweries in Schenectady County today.

## *Program Calendar, continued*

**Sunday, February 1 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

***Howlin' at the Moon Concert***

**Performers:** Running the River and Tophenjamin

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

**Cost:** \$5.00

Join us for a blend of classic country, rock, folk, Irish, blues, and fiddle tunes with Running the River. Also featuring brotherly duo Tophenjamin mixing the sounds of bluegrass, R&B, jazz, and rock.

**Saturday, February 7 – 2:00 p.m.**

***Finding Your Ancestors in Immigration and Naturalization Records\****

**Speaker:** Keren Weiner

**Location:** 32 Washington Avenue

Learn how to find illuminating documents that chronicle your ancestors' migration to the United States. For everyone who made the voyage, there is an individual story. Weiner uses individual examples to illustrate how to find immigration and naturalization documents and explains what you might expect to learn from them. SCHS Librarian/Archivist **Melissa Tacke** will give a short presentation, "**Researching Your Immigrant Ancestors: Resources in the Grems-Doolittle Library**" following Weiner's talk.

**Saturday, February 14 – 2:00 p.m.**

***Works by Lisa David Art Exhibit Opening***

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

Join us for a reception celebrating the opening of our new art exhibit, featuring works by local artist and teacher Lisa David.

**Saturday, February 28 – 2:00 p.m.**

***The Impact of the Erie Canal on Immigration\****

**Speaker:** Craig Williams

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

An illustrated talk discussing how the Erie Canal brought major changes to Schenectady, including waves of new settlers, immigrants and workers. Williams will also speak on Schenectady's initial skepticism of the canal, and how the canal has established ethnically diverse heritage in the region.

**Friday, March 6 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

***Howlin' at the Moon Concert\****

**Performers:** TBA

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

**Cost:** \$5.00

Join us for a night of great Irish music as we celebrate the Irish in Schenectady!

**Saturday, March 14 – 2:00 p.m.**

***American Girl Doll Tea featuring Rebecca Rubin\****

**Presenter:** Kaitlin Morton-Bentley

**Location:** 32 Washington Avenue

**Cost:** \$5.00 each for children and adults

Join us for this children's event as we explore immigration at the turn of the century through the eyes of American Girl doll Rebecca Rubin. Children are invited to bring their own American Girl dolls as we talk about historical artifacts, complete a craft activity, and enjoy refreshments. We ask each child to also bring an adult to accompany him or her. Registration is requested; call 518-374-0263, option 4, or email [exhibits@schenectadyhistorical.org](mailto:exhibits@schenectadyhistorical.org).

**Saturday, March 21 – 2:00 p.m.**

***"It Came from Schenectady" Exhibit Opening and selected readings with author Barry B. Longyear***

**Speaker:** Barry B. Longyear

**Location:** Franchere Education Center

Join us for the *It Came from Schenectady* opening reception, and for selected readings with award-winning science fiction author Barry B. Longyear. Longyear is the first writer to win the prestigious science fiction Hugo, Nebula, and John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer all in the same year. In addition to his acclaimed *Enemy Mine* series, his works include the *Circus World* and *Infinity Hold* series, *Sea of Glass*, *It Came from Schenectady*, other SF & fantasy novels, recovery works such as *Saint Mary Blue* and *Yesterday's Tomorrow*, and writing instruction works, like *The Write Stuff*, as well as numerous short stories.

**Saturday, March 28 – 2:00 p.m.**

***Electric City Immigrants: Italians and Poles of Schenectady, 1880-1930\****

**Speaker:** Dr. Robert Pascucci

**Location:** 32 Washington Avenue

Dr. Pascucci's presentation will focus on the two largest immigrant groups, Italian and Polish, that settled in Schenectady during its period of rapid economic growth that was fueled largely by General Electric and the American Locomotive Company. How these two immigrant groups adjusted to the city will be examined, as well as the impact that the new arrivals had on Schenectady.

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\* on pages 6 and 7 indicates that the program is part of our *Exploring Schenectady County's Immigrant Past* project, made possible by grants from the New York Council for the Humanities and the Schenectady County Initiative Program.

## STROSBERG – continued from page 1.

Dr. James Lucas Van Ingen's pugnacious personality may have been inherited from his Dutch grandfather, Dr. Dirk Van Ingen (1738-1814), a prominent Revolutionary War surgeon who commanded the 400-bed military hospital at the corner of Lafayette and Union Streets. Dirk, a founder and Treasurer of Union College, got into a dispute with its Board of Trustees and withheld important banking accounts until threatened with legal action. James, whose father Abraham (1774-1853) was a prominent attorney, attended the Schenectady Lyceum, a school for boys from prominent families. He then entered Union with the Class of 1840 preparing to study for the ministry and majoring in Hebrew. He joined the Psi Upsilon fraternity. He was selected Class Orator and gave the graduation address in Dutch! While at Union he also served as a fireman of Engine Company #2.

For reasons unknown, he switched his vocation from the clergy to medicine and moved to New York to matriculate at Columbia even though he could have attended Albany Medical College. Twice he travelled to Europe, including England, Scotland, Germany, and France, to benefit from the large teaching hospitals and the ability to examine female patients. In 1854, the *Schenectady Reflector* noted that Dr. James L. Van Ingen established his own hospital. Although he was a widely sought-after consultant, his personality must have been a severe obstacle to building his own practice and attracting new patients. He regularly advertised in the Schenectady newspapers, which was quite unusual for physicians at that time. He once wrote that he was accepting patients with eye, ear, nose, and throat disease. Fortunately for his patients, his medical skill and judgment matched his ego!

In 1847 Van Ingen performed brain surgery on Steve Van Vranken, age one, who fell down stairs, impaling his head on a ten-penny nail to a depth of 2 1/4 inches. The child soon developed convulsions, vomiting, and a weak pulse. Against the advice of most of the other attending doctors, Van Ingen performed a trephination, creating a hole through the skull, and the patient recovered. The case was published in the *New York State Journal of Medicine*.

Van Ingen practiced in Cincinnati from 1856-1858, possibly because his Schenectady practice did not flourish. Even there he got himself into difficulty. As a spectator, he attended a malpractice trial concerning an apparent elbow fracture that did not heal well. Six doctors, all professors at the Eclectic School of Medicine, testified that the treatment was correct. On his own initiative he visited the judge at his home on

the Sabbath, bringing along the bones of an elbow and persuaded him that the patient, a 14 year old boy, had suffered a dislocation, not a fracture. The judge called Van Ingen to testify at the trial and, much to the chagrin of the local doctors, he refuted the fracture theory. But the jury disregarded his testimony and found no malpractice. One of the local doctors wrote in the *Eclectic Medical Journal* that the Schenectadian had "exhibited marked ignorance of surgery and surgical sciences." Van Ingen then sued the Editorial Board of the journal for libel. In preparation for the trial he brought the boy to Dr. Alden March in Albany and to Buffalo and New York for confirmatory opinions and even had wood carvings and illustrations created to illustrate his theory to the jury.

Why did Dr. Van Ingen spend so much money to clear his name in Cincinnati, especially since he would be leaving that city because of his self-tarnished reputation in its medical community? The sad part of the story is that Van Ingen was a pioneer in orthopedic surgery, had published several articles in medical journals, and was credited with developing the counter traction method of reducing fractures. Instead of going to a judge, why didn't he approach his colleagues with his theory of dislocation? He sought damages of \$10,000 for libel. The jury awarded him \$100.

During the Civil War, Van Ingen first joined the 18th New York Regiment but resigned after the Battle of Bull Run because he did not like the climate! He later reenlisted with the 5th New York Regiment, otherwise known as Duryee's Zouaves.



A mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century medical toolkit, which explains why doctors of that era and beyond were called "sawbones."



In 1862, Dr. Van Ingen was court-martialed on charges of assaulting and cursing a private, hitting a drunk in a saloon with a chair, harassing a lady, making a house call while intoxicated, and “conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.” The medical testimony at the trial was all favorable to Van Ingen’s capability as a physician. A nurse who worked for him at his hospital said *“He never missed one day of work, never appeared intoxicated, and never lost a patient.”* The commanding general of the regiment stated that he had received a letter from the Surgeon General of New York highly endorsing Dr. Van Ingen. In his defense, Van Ingen provided a long list of accomplishments including service in the pre-War Navy on the *USS Ohio* and *Falcon*, successfully treating yellow fever, cholera, and Mexican diarrhea, although he himself was sick and lost over 100 pounds. He was found guilty on one charge. After he refused to appear before a medical examining board, he was discharged from the Army because of *“insufficient professional knowledge and bad habits involving intemperance and violence.”* He appealed his discharge to President Lincoln, who personally wrote the Judge Advocate General to look into the court martial. Despite a good review from General George B. McClellan, the dismissal stood.

After returning to Schenectady, he served twice as City Physician, 1864-65 and 1867-68. His duties included examining slaughterhouses and hog pens and other public health hazards along with canal boats passing through, providing endless opportunities for disputes and fights. He enjoyed discrediting homeopathic physicians who prescribed extremely dilute solutions of medicine. When he performed a consultation on a patient already under homeopathic care he would call for their medicines, drink all of them up at once, and tell the family *“there you are, not a bit of potency in all that medicine.”* Dr. Harman Swits, the only homeopath in all of Schenectady County, prepared a trap for Van Ingen, giving his patients a bottle of full strength Ipecac, with instructions to take one drop each week. Inevitably, Dr. Van Ingen attended one of those patients, swallowed all of his medicine, and was violently sick for a week.



*One drop is useless, a whole bottle is poison*

Van Ingen once sued a farmer in New York State Supreme Court who suffered a fractured knee falling from his wagon onto the frozen ground taking a load of hay to Albany on the Western Turnpike about six miles from Schenectady. He had responded to a plea for help from another doctor during a blizzard to treat his fracture. He requested a \$1,000 fee for his services, which included about 30 house calls. The patient claimed malpractice. Apparently, when the patient ran out of the medicine Dr. Van Ingen had given him to treat his leg ulcers, the patient bathed his leg in whiskey and the good doctor lost his temper. The plaintiff’s attorney accused him of being *“short, arbitrary, opinionated, and unfeeling.”* Dr. John Swinburn, Professor of Orthopedics at Albany (later Mayor of Albany and US Congressman) and Dr. Alexander M. Vedder (Curator at Albany Medical College and a later Mayor of Schenectady) testified that Dr. Van Ingen’s care was excellent. Swinburn added that *“he himself would not have gone out in that bad winter weather for any man, even for \$500.”* The malpractice case was dropped and Van Ingen was awarded \$150 for his services.

Other legal problems included a lawsuit in Surrogate Court over the will of his father in 1853, an arrest in 1876 for refusing to answer a summons, and a breakup of his medical partnership with Dr. Artemus Chapel at 148 State Street in 1850.

In 1849 Dr. Van Ingen married Abbey Rising of Hartford, Connecticut, a member of the family whose patriarch had established the Rising Insurance Company in 1834. In Schenectady, they lived on Smith Street, had no children, and were extremely devoted to one another. It may have been for Abbey that he switched from the Dutch Reformed to the Episcopal Church. During communion at St. George’s, he would always drink the entire portion of wine, citing the scripture *“Drink ye all of this.”* In his waning years when his mental acumen was decreasing, his wife, ever protective, followed his patients to their drug stores and asked the pharmacists not to fill his prescriptions.

What is to be learned from the life of James Lucas Van Ingen? Based on his academic record, he was highly intelligent and very highly trained as a physician. But his personality was a constant stumbling block throughout his life. When the Schenectady Medical Society was reestablished in 1870, he refused to join. Fortunately, he married an understanding wife, his anchor to reality. He recognized and appreciated her help as a life mate, switched to her church, and finally, when he died in 1881, chose to be buried in her family plot in Zion Hill Cemetery in Suffield, Hartford County, Connecticut, where she joined him 23 years later.

## Our Fall Interns



*Katy Restifo works on research for the redevelopment of the TerBush Gallery colonial exhibit.*

This fall, we welcomed four interns to 32 Washington Avenue and the Mabee Farm Historic Site: Shanon Douglas, Sarah Kirby, Brendan Pronteau, and Katy Restifo joined the team, bringing enthusiasm and fresh perspectives.

Collections intern Sarah Kirby is a recent graduate of SUNY Buffalo State and a lifelong Schenectady resident. Sarah has been instrumental in processing and inventorying the collection at Mabee Farm Historic Site. She credits the SCHS internship with giving her a solid foundation in collections management. "The project will help immensely in the future because I hope to pursue a career working with museum collections," she said. "Being from Schenectady, it has also been great learning about local history."

Brendan Pronteau graduated with an M.A. in Public History from the University at Albany last December. As an exhibits intern, Brendan's passion for history showed in his meticulous research and writing. "Seeing my research on exhibit panels was very exciting," he said. "I learned that flexibility and creativity are key when working in a small historical institution. This will help further my career, as I will take these lessons and apply them at another historical institution."

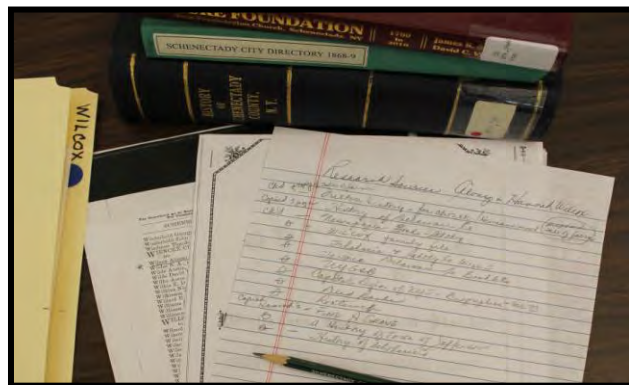
Katy Restifo is another recent grad, having earned a B.A. in history from SUNY New Paltz. She reflected on her time as a collections and exhibits intern: "So many things come to mind. Not just researching and giving tours, but also feeding Goat Girl, churning butter, decorating Christmas trees and meeting amazing people working with a smile and purpose." Katy's enthusiasm and passion for history will take her far in the museum field. "My time here has illuminated the path I would like to walk down, and given me many of the tools to do so," she said.

Focused and diligent, education intern Shanon Douglass delved right into research, coming up with new, creative ideas for education programs. A Union College senior,

Shanon worked on pre- and post-visit materials for classrooms, connecting lesson plans with education standards. "Shanon was a pleasure to work with, and I hope her experience at SCHS will support her future endeavors," said Kaitlin Morton-Bentley of the aspiring museum professional.

This fall's interns have helped to move SCHS forward, and the staff is deeply grateful for their hard work, creativity and dedication. We wish Shanon, Sarah, Brendan, and Katy the very best in their future endeavors.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Dianne Gade



*The tools of the trade: Dianne Gade uses a variety of resources to research genealogy queries in our Library.*

If you've ever visited the Grems-Doolittle Library to do genealogy research, or if you've ever had the Library perform research on your behalf, it's likely that you've been helped by Dianne Gade, a volunteer in the Library since December, 2005, nine whole years!

Many Library visitors have rejoiced in finding a long-elusive piece of evidence in putting together their family history thanks to Dianne's assistance. Her skill in performing research is legendary in the Library, earning her the nicknames "Sherlock" and "Goddess of the Hunt." Dianne says that helping people find the original sources that they need to answer questions about their ancestry is the most rewarding aspect of her volunteer work.

When Dianne isn't working on research or assisting customers, she takes on a variety of other projects in the Library, including data entry, indexing, filing, and collections processing.

In addition to being knowledgeable about our collections and thorough and detailed in every project she takes on, Dianne is unfailingly upbeat, friendly, and helpful. She sincerely enjoys helping people, and her passion to help others shines through in everything she does.

When asked for any words of wisdom she would pass along to potential volunteers or new volunteers, Dianne offered, "be patient and willing to learn new things."

Thank you, Dianne, for all of your hard work!



## *Around the Society*



*'Where Do You Come From' Art Exhibit at the Franchere Center.*



*Patrícia Bush - 'I Come From The Farm'*



*Hops and Hogsheads: Beer from Colonial to Craft Brew Exhibit at Franchere Center through March 12, 2015.*



*Festival of Trees*





Schenectady County Historical Society  
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